

Smoking, Vaping and COVID-19: How quitting can reduce your risk

What is the COVID-19 Virus?

The COVID-19 virus is one of many types of coronaviruses that can cause severe respiratory infections. While most individuals who contract COVID-19 have symptoms that appear 2-14 days after exposure, many do not show outward signs of infection and can spread the virus unknowingly to others. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19, and the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed.

How can I reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19?

By following 5 simple guidelines you can reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19 and help create a safer place for your family and others in your community.¹

- Practice social distancing in public places, stay six feet away from others
- Wash your hands with soap and water often, for 20 seconds at a time or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content
- Avoid touching your face if you have not washed your hands
- Wear a face mask in public to help protect others
- If you smoke or vape quit now for the health of you and your family

“Smoking makes you more susceptible to COVID-19 because it destroys some of your lungs natural defense mechanisms and vaping may do the same thing.”

—Dr. Neal Patel, Mayo Clinic Pulmonologist and Critical Care Specialist.²

Why are smokers and people who vape at higher risk of contracting a respiratory virus like COVID-19?

The act of smoking and vaping increases the possibility of transmitting a virus from hand to mouth. Smoking compromises the immune system's ability to fight infections. Smokers have decreased lung capacity, increasing their risk of experiencing more complications caused by respiratory infections. And, individuals who vape are at higher risk of acquiring a respiratory infection.^{3,4,5,6}

What have we learned about smoking and COVID-19 from research studies in other countries?

Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 are at higher risk of having a severe illness and of dying if they have a smoking-related pre-existing condition such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, or cancer. Smokers are 1.4 times more likely to have severe symptoms of COVID-19 than non-smokers and 2.4 times more likely to be admitted to an ICU, require use of a ventilator, and more likely to die than non-smokers.^{7,8}



How do I get help to quit smoking or vaping? Contact the Arizona Smokers' Helpline

- **Call us at: 1-800-55-66-22 or Visit us at: ashline.org**
- Telephone quit coaching and quit medication are available to all eligible callers



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